

Personal Diary - Flights - By 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. ~~2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. F/O~~ R. L. Henbest

~~T-132908~~ AO-2001903

Thurs. ~~Friday~~, December 14, 1944

Left Topeka A.A.F. Kansas to begin overseas Rafs [?] to combat base at Giaia, Italy. Route: Topeka, Kansas to Grenier, N. H., to Gander, Newfoundland to Lagers, Azores, to Marrakesh, French Morrocco to Tiruis, Tunisia, to Giaia, Italy.

We took off early for Chicago where we buzzed Mel's home. Then, we flew to Lansing, Mich., where we buzzed Roger's home. Then, we flew by way of Syracuse to Grenier, N. H. Rog didn't want to buzz Elmira. We had bad weather.

After landing about 6 P.M. we were processed, ate some eggs, then off to bed. I was issued a pair of sun glasses, snow glasses and parka & pants there. Before bedtime we had to attend briefing on our route to Newfoundland.

Friday, ~~Saturday~~, December 15, 1944

Got up quite early, went out to plane and left shortly afterward for Gander, Newfoundland. Had more bad weather in route. Was fun looking at the passing Arcadian farms in Nova Scotia. Arrived at Gander around 6 PM. It is a huge airbase. We lived in excellent quarters & had fairly good food. Was quite cold. Very rocky & barren country. Was former German base.

Saturday, December 16, 1944  
& Sunday, December 17, 1944

Poor weather prevented our departure. Had amusing encounters with Canadian currency. The "Goofy Newfies." Girls in the P.X. corrected our pronunciation of their country. Many R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. personnel there. Saw an excellent Canadian stage show that night & had a friendly but interesting conversation with three Canadian Air women.

Monday, December 18, 1944

Stayed up all night as we left for the Azores at 1 A.M. Had bad weather most of the way. My sun glasses were stolen just before I left. Arrived in Azores that P.M. Had to learn about the Part. "Scoat" = 4 (cents) Amer. Quarters so poor slept in ship. Food was terrible there. "Scoat" = Escudos

Tuesday, December 19, 1944

Due to circumstances all four of us and Ranwell slept in the plane all night. We left Lagens Airfield in the Azores at 10:20 G.M.T. for Marraketch Airfield outside of Casablanca, French Morocco, N. Africa. Went through a front and some scattered weather all the way to destination. Did not see any signs of two ships reported down on route. Hit African coast at 4 P.M. and arrived at Marraketch at 5 P.M. (G.M.T.) P.M.L.C.T.

Marraketch appeared to be a big city from the air. Has a large airfield-formerly French. Saw lots of A-26's there. We lived in Red stone bldgs.-the crew in tents. The latrine was unique-merely a pit in the corner of the room-very unsanitary. It turned out to be cold nights there.

The meals were fair. We were waited on by former Italian P.O.W.

The next morning we got up bright and early to depart.

Wednesday, December 20, 1944

Before leaving, the crew, Fred and I went to the P.X. where we had many amusing experiences with Francs. One franc = 2 cents American. 50 centannes (sp?) = 1 franc of 1/2 cent Amer. We flew at low alt. all the way to Tunis due to bad weather. We passed East of Casablanca to Meknes, then to Aram, Algiers, then Tunis. We flew some of the latter legs about three miles off coast over the Mediterranean. Saw a 15 ship convoy. Flew only 500 feet off the sea at times. We landed late at Tunis about 6 P.M. G.M.T. (El Aouina).

Thursday, December 21, 1944 & 22 & Friday.

Storm areas over Giaia, Italy, our destination, and hear have made runways bad & flight impossible for a few days. Very wet country-muddy-unsanitary. Have seen veiled women, Arabs, camels, etc. Field in progress of reconstruction after damage during Tunisian campaign. Food fair. Went to town on 22<sup>nd</sup> after censoring some mail. Tunis is a dirty city. Saw town with 11 yr. old Jewish lad who could speak 4 languages. Came back & packed bags to leave.

Saturday, 23 December 1944

Went on Red Cross tour of the Kasbah in Tunis at 9:15 A.M.-15 transients, an M.P., Red Cross girl, Elly Crane, and French guide-George.

Purchased a red Fez while there for 100 francs or \$2 American. Kasbah mostly undercover with vents for air. Very narrow, dirty, smelly streets - 5 ft. wide or so. Kasbah is native quarter - French, Arabs, Italians, Jews. An arch (stone) and statute form entrance. Saw a Mosque, one of the Bey's palaces - 20K throne & 18K ceilings. Saw Fez's in making, shoe shops, restaurants, etc. Upon entering Kasbah was amazed to hear a record playing Fran Sinatra. Mel bought a native wallet & perfume. Fred got a Fez also. In P.M. went out to plane to straighten belongings out.

Sunday, 24 December 1944

More bad weather en route. Slept all morning; played ping pong at club, then went to plane for awhile. Went to movies, Abbott & Costello in "In Society," Swelled-came back & went to bed. Guys getting drunk to drown their sorrows.

Monday, 25 December 1944

Fred & I went to church only to find no services; came back & wrote letters until time to eat dinner of turkey, etc. At 2 P.M. went with Red Cross tour of ruins of Carthage. Saw first, ruins of amphitheater where "Lady of Beast" trials were held. Took pictures of "white fathers" from Cathedral on hill. Missed seeing Cathedral because of services. Next went in trucks to ruins of city and open air theatre. Later, to ruins of docks along harbor coast.

Tuesday & Wednesday, December 26, 27, 1944

Again bad weather. Changed money into Lire (Lee ray) for use in Italy. \$214.30 in possession with all debts paid. Saw crazy film, "A broad with two Yanks," starring Bendix & O'Keefe. Almost left 27<sup>th</sup>, others did but returned because of bad weather. Ransdell was grounded.

Thursday, Friday & Saturday, 28, 29, & 30 of December 1944.

Fronts, rain, or what have you have grounded us for an indefinite period. The mud is terrific. Have acquired a terrific amount of sleep. Saw, "Devotion" starring DeHavilland, Lupino & Heurid-marvelous photoplay about the famous Bronti pictures sisters. Rains intermittently. De Maupassant's short stories have been my form of pleasure.

Sunday, 31 December 1944

New Year's Eve. More rain and land here. Placed as transients in 724<sup>th</sup> sqdn. We lived with 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Reicsh, Sqdn. Nav. & Rog lived with Capt. Mokell (?). Adj. lived in homemade huts & tents in an olive grove of former Italian Admiral.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & ~~Friday~~ - 1,2,3,4,5 January 1945

More rain & mud. Continue to sleep, read books, study bombing notes, eat, shower, etc. every day. Saw "The Falcon In Mexico" the 2<sup>nd</sup> and "Lady in the Dark" - Ginger Rogers-the 3<sup>th</sup>. Today, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> we almost left. We taxied out to take off, but flight was cancelled. Fortunately, a B-17 stuck in mud ahead of us held us here long enough.

Friday, 5 January 1945

Left Tunis, Tunisia for Gaia, Italy - final destination. Rain storms on way. Flew at 2000 feet. Came from Tunis to Sicily, around south coast of Sicily, up east coast, then to Italy. Taranto, Giaia, & Castellucia, Giaia unserviceable-had to

Saturday, Sunday & Monday - 6,7,8 Jan. 1945

Lived in 727<sup>th</sup>. Rain, mud & snow. House costs \$150. Italian boys act as servants at a \$1 or so a week. Afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> assigned permanently to this field in 15<sup>th</sup> A. Force, 451 Bomb Gp. (H), 727<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sqdn. A.P.O. #520, 49<sup>th</sup> Wing. Moved in with Lt. Ned Smith. His crew lost in Yugoslavia. Enlisted men live in makeshift dwelling.

Tuesday & Weds, Thurs. 9, 10, 11 Jan. 1945

Meeting of Bombardiers-finding out what score is here (35 missions). Snow storm on 10<sup>th</sup>. Wrote multi letters. Send home for package. Capt. Salt Sqdn. Bombardier.

Friday, 12 January 1945

Flew first practice mission-20000'. Flew as Deputy lead. Dropped (toggled) 4 bombs on Pianosa Island-six ship formation-were in #2. Made several practice runs on Foggia and Pianosa. Checked Fred out as tagglere [?]. Rog checked out.

Saturday, 13 January 1945

Put up tent and acquired a stove mud [?]. Cessna, Banks & Enlisted men became "slightly inebriated. Strickland reverted to type-drunk & went wild & tried to kill me. Apologized next day.

For a bottle of brandy. Flew in P.M. in "Mickey" (Radar) ship-checked equipment for Captain Salt Squadron Bombardier. Made Radar bombing runs on Pianosa Island.

Sunday, 14 January 1945

Zone backs [?] as Combat Zone, instead of zone of Communications. Have to dig fox holes. Raining all day. Got cold in throat. We all dubbed our shoes today.

Monday, 15 January 1945

Flew on gunnery range today & dropped bombs in gulf near Taranto from 300 ft. Overcast & sight mal. prevented us from bombing range #7. Flew with Bomb 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Hougley [?]. Rog flew as co-pilot. Took 1st shower in 10 days-was wonderful. Ned flew on Vienna raid today. Went into Foggia on 11<sup>th</sup>. Quite a dirty city. Many bombed buildings. Had transportation difficulties. Have a nice Officers Club & P.X. in town.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - 16, 17 & 18 Jan. 1945

More rain! Had two "Gooks" dig a trench to serve as fox holes for us for 8 packs of "20 Grand" Cigs. Went into Foggia the 17<sup>th</sup> took blood test, x-ray, & urinalysis for 04. Got 2 candles for 1 pack of cigs. Bought \$15 worth of

Friday, 19 January 1945

What a beautiful day-our first.

Saturday, 20 January 1945

The big day-my first combat mission. Got up at 0445, briefed at 0600 took off around 0830. Rode on flight deck until I.P. time, then dropped bombs & came back. Flew Dog-6 positions. Target was North Main Marshalling Yards at Linz, Germany (between Muncheon [?] and [illegible]) 160 odd guns-flaks [?] was low, but quite accurate. Robertson said my bombs hit the yards. Flew at 25,000' approx. carried 40 100 lb. G.P. bombs. One flak hole in #2 cowling. Rack mal. [?] dropped all but 6 bombs (3 stations). Used screw driver & dropped these 6 in Adriatic. Ransdell passed out in U. Turret & Chalfen almost did, helping me. Gunners [?] Inst. In waist passed out.

1/20/45 When I came back up from the nose to the flight deck, I looked up and Clyde wasn't moving in the upper turret. Then I noticed he was turning blue. We were on oxygen and I check his mask and found it disconnected. I decided to pull him out of the turret by unhitching the seat. I got him on the deck when Mel looked back and saw the problem. Mel came to us without oxygen and started to pass out. I had Clyde plugged into oxygen & also turned on his electric flight suit. Both were on high setting. Mel had to go back & get on oxygen. I didn't know what else to do. We were still over enemy area. Soon Clyde started jumping from the hot suit. I turned everything down to normal and in a few minutes he was O.K. and wondered how he got there.

Clothes with \$20.50 we received as per diem on overseas trip. Today, Fred & I went to Photo Identification class at "group" & I had my promotion picture taken.

Birth. Supposed to fly with Lt. Spreho today but bad weather cancelled briefing. Sunday dinner. At present it is raining in - what luck. Our "Gook" Sammy, a 14 yr. old, "Eye-Tie" boy just came in. He has been teaching us Italian with little success.

Monday & Tuesday - 29, 30 January 1945

Weather inactive. Acquired some white dope for inside of tent plus kerosene and a luggage carrier of which we will make a table. Had photo. Ident. Class. Saw "Pick-Up" a V-D film. Received some more mail so answered some letters. Had cheese sandwiches tonight. Mmmmm!

Wednesday, 31 January 1945

Flew mission #2 today. Got up at 0515 and briefed at Group at 0600. Take-off 0820 - landing 1600 -7:40. Maximum 15<sup>th</sup> A.A.F. effort against Moosbierbaum Oil Ref., near Vienna, Austria. I flew with Lt. Martin and crew in Able 6 position in ship "13" an old ship. Col. Stefonovich flew lead plus all the other big "wheels." We led the air force. The target was undercast-used "Mickey."

Our bomb run the lead Midsey "aborted" & Capt. Salt's Midsey took over-run too short so we had abandoned the target. Rear elements hit flak. Proceeded to Baker target of M/Yards at Graz, Austria at 1410 bombs away - 8 - 500 lb. bombs Hits in target area. Some flak at our level. We had oxygen trouble in waist. 60 P-51's were escort. I was paid for two months - over \$500.

THIS RATION CARD IS VOID AT  
OTHER THAN EL AOUINA EXCHANGE –  
1260<sup>TH</sup> AAF BASE UNIT NAFD-ATC  
ONLY DAILY RATIONS  
MAY BE DRAWN

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ RANK \_\_\_\_\_

5325 KEEP THIS CARD

1. AS AUTHORITY FOR RE-ISSUE.
2. PROOF OF ARRIVAL DATE FOR  
ISSUANCE OF PASSES.

EL AOUINA EXCHANGE DAILY RATION  
(GOOD FOR SEVEN (7) DAYS)

CIGARETTES	X X X X X X X
CIGARS	
TOBACCO	
MATCHES	X
CANDY	X X X X X _____
GUM	X X _____
SOAP	_____
SHAVING CREAM	
TOOTH PASTE	
TOOTH BRUSH	
RAZOR BLADES	_____
COCA COLA	

Thursday, 1 February 1945

Flew mission #3 today. Bombed by P.F.F. Oil refinery at Moosbierbaum, Austria - 22 miles West of Vienna. Flew C-5 position. Fred & I flew with Tedesco and Nichols (cp) & their crew. Wes Banks 1<sup>st</sup> Undercast. Formation did 360 degree turn to get above clouds & then went to I.P. over target #2 engine ran out of gas - had to leave formation & head for Island of Vis off Yugo. Very little flak over target. At Vis we received one blanket - had to sleep on floor of attic. Waited for hours for chow of C rations. At 8 P.M. or later, we were taken to another bldg. where we had a cot & warm room. Nearly lost Fred on dark streets. A "Partisan" gave me a red star insignia for a package of K-ration cigs (Marvels). Bombs away 1321.

Friday, 2 February 1945

Got up around 7-7:30 A.M. prepared to leave Vis for Castalia, Italy. Before leaving, a Partisan gave me a Kuna [?] bill for my short snorter [?]. A truck took us to the field & we were off. Took a shower & cleaned up. Got another batch of mail-my 1<sup>st</sup> from Mom addressed to #520. Yesterday a P-38 flew formation with us until our engineer equalized the 200 gals. Of gas & got #2 started.

Saturday, 3 February 1945.

Flew a practice mission today. I flew with Lt. Garfarth in #4 position in a 4-ship formation. We dropped bombs on target #7. Our second run we dropped 4 bombs hitting target in center. Became late - hard to pick up target - so only made 3 runs. In P.M. Rog, Pohl, and I went to Group to see a U.S.O. show - "Times Square." It was pretty good. The enlisted men have started building their house.

Sunday, 4 February 1945

Obtained weeks rations today which wasn't much - 1 pk. Of gum, 5 cigs, 2 cigars (for Fred), pk. Of candy, 4 candy bars, jar of Vaseline. Rog painted the tent ceiling on his side with some white dope-much lighter now. Our "Gook" Sammy built some junk out front-must set him straight. Wrote to Sis today.

Monday, 5 February 1945

Flew #4 today with entire crew. Rog flew as CP to Schaffer. We were in D-4 position-my chance to synchronize. We bombed Regensburg Winter Harbor Oil storage, Germany from 25,000' - temp - 38 degrees at 1320 (?). Dropped 12 - 250 lb. G.P. bombs. Had to drop 4 in Adriatic to lighten the load. Target partially visible - bombed by P.F.F. Group lead dropped his bombs & I did also - turned out to be an error. We went over Rosenheim, Germany and dropped our remaining bombs. Was 8 hr. mission. Had a V-D lecture tonight. Received three letters - 2 from Mom. Seems to be a great deal of discussion about today's mission.

Tuesday, 6 February 1945.

Went to skeet range at 0830, but was cancelled after we got out there so back we came. Did not do much all day, except write letters and get a brush hair cut for 20 lire.



Wednesday, 7 February 1945.

Had my "64" completed today with F/O Fisher another bombardier. Also had picture taken at Group. Doped some more of the ceiling white. Received a v-mail from Mom. At 14:45 went out and shot some skeet - 10 rounds with a 12 gage shot gun. I hit 3 birds 2<sup>nd</sup> best in crew. Miller hit 6. The fellows went on a rough raid today - Vienna - lost some ships. Every 2 officers got a bottle of whiskey for \$2.00. I gave mine to the others. Paid \$4.50 for bricks today.

Thursday, 8 February 1945

Flew mission #5 today so I will get the Air Medal and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. We bombed the Vienna Central Locomotive Repair Shops on P.F.F. I flew in A-3 position in the ship we came overseas in. I flew with Thomas (P) and his crew. Weaver was (CP) and Conti was Nav. Condi did navigation from the flight deck at the Engineer's table and I had the nose to myself. My crew flew in A-5 position - all except Rog & Mel. It was swell having the nose to myself. We dropped 8 - 500 lb. G.P. bombs at 1300. Planes and flak was everywhere. Very poor fighter escort. Almost an undercast over the target area. Flaks was terrific but it didn't bother our group at all \* The 451<sup>st</sup> got its 3<sup>rd</sup> citation today - (Presidential).

Friday, 9 February 1945

Flew a practice mission today in #12 a new "L". We flew in #7 position. I flew with Compton and Ross (Pilots) and Rutledge, Nav. I was to check the Nav. Out as a "Toggelere". I dropped 2 bombs on #7. The Nav. Dropped the rest in the Adriatic. The fuse in a bomb came apart in the air - I put in a match stick which took care of it O.K. Painted the tent ceiling again. Had a short class this P.M. with E6B. Hope to go to Foggia tomorrow.

Saturday, 10 February 1945

Went to town today - 1<sup>st</sup> time in 30 days. We left about 9 A.M. for Cerignola. We were lucky in getting rides. In Cerignola, I bought a pair boots, a hood, & hankies. In the Red Cross club there, I found the names of three Elmirans - officers - stationed in the vicinity; Galberth (?), Orlawsky & another. At noon we went to Foggia with our- got [illegible], and hinges for 7 packs of cigarettes.. A couple Canadians gave us a lift part way back.

Sunday, 11 February 1945

Flew a practice mission with crew to gunnery range for 2:05 [illegible]. Hooked up with [illegible] to [illegible]. Took a shower, shaved too. Am [illegible] to fly a mission with my crew tomorrow. Got rations, today - suspect our "Gook" of pilfering our supplies.

Monday, 12 February 1945

Was not to fly mission. New system has bombardier in #1, 2, & 4 position [illegible] have toggle. Therefore, I am being screwed. Had a bomb class at 0900. My 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. forms went in today. Slept part of the day & did a little more painting.

Tuesday, 13 February 1945, Wed, Thurs, Fri. 14, 15, 16 Feb. 1945

Haven't done much - slept half the time. Crew has flown a couple times without me. Enlisted men have house, table & double decker bunks finished. Thurs. rec'd a box from Shirley Ruth.

Made a stove today. In P.M. I went to Group and was sworn in as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Learned that Burn's crew crashed while returning from Vis. We moved into their house-we had lived there before.

Saturday, 17 February 1945

Flew #6 mission today. Flinchbough [?] 32<sup>nd</sup> mission was pilot. I flew with crew #179 who lost their pilot (Ross) on the 1<sup>st</sup> mission (flak got him in the leg, he bled to death). We flew in #7 in Fox 4 position-carried 8 500 lb. G.P. bombs. We bombed the Loco Repair Depot at Wels, Austria. We bombed by Pathfinder due to complete cloud undercast. Our "Mickey" went out - on the run so we made a dry run, then Col. Stefonowitz aborted & led us over the target again. No flaks but saw lots to our right over Linz. Dropped bombs at 1409. Heard from Vally today.

Sunday, 18 February 1945

"Sacked [?] up" all morning. At 2:00 P.M. had bomb trainer - trainer out so came back & got my rations. Got 129 bricks today.

Monday, 19 February 1945

"Sacked [?] up" until noon. Ate chow and got 4 letters from Mom. Rog and I got a barrel (burned it out), shell case for a new stove-have to get it tomorrow. Flew on a test hop with Rog & Mel & Strickland & Robertson of #14 just repaired. Up front 1605-1705 - 15 minutes of stick time on the B-24L - more fun. Getting quite cold-snow flurries today. Salt bombed Graz sight mal 7 miles short of target Wow! Haughey hit target.

Tuesday, 20 February 1945.

Flew #7 today. Blain was pilot. Rog, Banks, and I flew with his crew. We flew in #4 (the "armored" 8<sup>th</sup> A.F. plane), in C-3 position. We carried 8 - 500 lb. G.P. bombs. We were to bomb Bolzano, Italy in Brenner Pass, but since it had to be a visual target we were forced to bomb our 4<sup>th</sup> alternate - the Naval Yards at Pola, N. Italy. On way to Bolzano we passed by Trieste in time to see another group bomb targets there - Cava - beautiful bombing - they rallied into us. When we came back the target was still burning. Had a Sperry sight so couldn't sync. Salt made a dry run on Pola - had medium flak - the 2<sup>nd</sup> run they really gave us flak - Blain was almost hit in the leg by a piece. We had gas troubles. Tagged 6 hrs. today. Get a new stove tomorrow.

Wednesday, 21 February 1945.

Flew #9 today. We bombed the Marshalling Yards at Augsburg, Germany by P.F.F. Undercast over target. Terrific flak at target. Our whole crew flew together in F-3 position. Lost one ship in group another Sqdn. We dropped four 1000 lb. bombs. Lots of railroad flak. Saw a fire near target. Dropped 4 1000 lb. bombs.

Thursday, 22 February 1945

Spent today fixing up our new house. Painted the door blue and changed the house number from "13" to "10." Fixed up another light & light switch. In P.M. I made a table for us. We all had to censor mail tonight. At 7 P.M. we had a short talk before flying tomorrow on mission.

Friday, 23 February 1945

Flew #8 today. Tedesco was Pilot and Sellers, Nav. Rog and I flew with our own crew. Was Rog's 5<sup>th</sup> mission & the E.M.'s sixth. Mel has 2 and Fred H. Flew in A-6 position in #9. I had the nose to myself today-no sight. We almost aborted as we could not transfer fuel. We were supposed to bomb Amstetten, Austria, East of Linz visually. When we got over the target it was undercast so we went to our alternate of Knittelfeld, Austria. Made three runs on it-clouds hindered us on 3<sup>rd</sup> run. Saturday, 24 February 1945.

Went to target Identification at 2:15 P.M. Received Wals's rations and then went to Bomb Trainer with Smith. Bombsight was out so we came back. Rog and I went after our "coke" and beer rations that night. Spreba [?] made us "Frag Clusters" Ugh!! Later Spreba paid us a "Piss Call." Rog made multi popcorn which hit the spot

Sunday, 25 February 1945.

Have had a bad case of hiccoughs all day. We all went to church this A.M. Rog was Duty Officer today. Inspected a formation stick mock-up. After chow, we got "extra" rations and then I finished our table and made a lid for my "footlocker." On the raid to Linz today, our squadron lost Compton & his crew-plane exploded over target.

purpose of checking each other out as Flight Lead. Dropped 20 bombs on Range #7. Nearly froze up there. Attended a "mock Courts Martial" at Group. Painted table and wash stand yellow.

Monday, 26 February 1945.

Flew today to Sisals, Yugoslavia to bomb the Caprag Oil Refinery. Under prevented us from bombing so I had to put the pins back in the 8-500 powders. It wasn't counted as a mission-which p'd us off. Still suffered from the hiccoughs and gas pains.

Tuesday, 27 February 1945.

Flew #9 today. We bombed the Marshalling Yards at Augsburg, Germany by P.F.F. Undercast over target. Terrific flak at target. Our whole crew flew together in F-3 position. Lost one ship in group, another Sqdn. We dropped four 1000 bombs. Lots of railroad flak. Saw a fire near target. Dropped 4 1000 lb. bombs.

Wednesday, 28 February 1945.

Payday today. Sent \$150.00 home by P.T.A. plus an \$18.75 bond and \$100 allotment. Had to get a cholera shot. Received two packages from Mom. Thursday, 1 March 1945.

Went into Foggia today for cleaning, with Fred. Rog & Mel had a visitor, Bob Brewster.

We dropped our bombs. We carried eight 500-lb. G.P. bombs. We plastered the town and M/Y area. No flak seen today. Buddy is on way overseas. Received letters from Mom, Gasline and 2 from Larry.

Friday, 2 March

Flew #10 today. We bombed the Beacel [?] Plant and Marshalling Yards at Linz, Austria, by P.F.F. We dropped light 500 lb. bombs. To date, I have dropped 20 tons of bombs. Our whole crew flew together in F-5 position. Rog and some of the enlisted men had the G.I.'s so we used the bomb bays as a latrine. Flak was quite accurate and heavy. McCoy and Chavez didn't fly - G.I.'s. I jumped the can over Klagenfurt.

Saturday, 3 March 1945.

Rations today. At 11 A.M. had a meeting with Col. Stefonowitz - all bombardiers in P.M. I went to Group and was awarded the Air Medal by the Col. It came in a snazzy blue leather case. Had a Bombardiers Meeting at 6 P.M.

Sunday, 4 March 1945.

Bomb trainer with Smith. Windy all day. Missed sell-out.

Monday, 5 March 1945.

Flew a Practice Bombing Mission at 12000' on Range #7 today with Smith (P) and (CP) in ship #5 (043). Drake (B) and I flew together for purpose of checking each other out as Flight Lead. Dropped 20 bombs on range #7. Nearly froze up there. Attended a "mock courts martial" at Group. Painted table and wash stand yellow.

Tuesday, 6 March 1945

Flew another practice mission - T.O. 0900. Formation and bombing (20 bombs) in "L." Flew with Thyrie and C.P. also Drake (B). Bombed range #7. Mel received 3 boxes. Spent a lazy P.M.

Wednesday, 7 March 1945

Had meeting of Group - a farce. Spent P.M. building shelves for my jnk, and in finishing "footlocker."

Thursday, 8 March 1945.

Went to Target Ident. Class - a joke. Received another package from Mom plus several letters. Mel "building" something?

Friday, 9 March 1945

Flew a "milk run" yesterday - wish we would [?] Did! Flew #11 today. We bombed Graz, Austria the station and M/Y by P.F.F. We dropped 8 - 500 lb. G.P. bombs. Flew with Schaffer.

Saturday, 10 March 1945.

Went to briefing as lead Bombardier in Item flight. Stand down. Flew in Group Practice mission later in C-4 position. Dayton (P) and Smith (CP) flew with Drake again. Salt wants us to work out as a lead team. Camera bombings - 4 runs the rest was formations. Listened to radio compass & slept most of the time. Missed chow but got rations.

Sunday, 11 March 1945.

Went to church with Banks & E.M. this A.M. Mel, Rog & Ransdell flew a formation Prac. Miss. Went to sell-out of rations today.

Monday, 12 March 1945

Rog & Mel went to town. Built some more stuff - yellow paint. Bomb trainer in P.M. Saw "China" at night.

[THE FOLLOWING WAS TYPED ON A STRIP OF PAPER: *was assigned to each mission aircraft. I did fine first two bombing runs with misses in the 50 to 60 foot range.*]

THE FOLLOWING IS TYPED, RATHER THAN HAND-WRITTEN:

FROM: ROBERT L. HENBEST, 44-13 MIDLAND, COMES: "ON FRIDAY, 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 45, OUR 451<sup>ST</sup> GP, WAS ORDERED TO BOMB LINZ, AUSTRIA MARSHALING YARDS."

"ROGER CESSNA, OUR FIRST PILOT AND ALL ENLISTED MEN HAD THE G.I.'S. TWO WERE SO BAD THEY COULD NOT GO ON THE MISSION AND WE WENT WITHOUT THEM. THE CO-PILOT, MEL CHALFEN, NAVIGATOR, FRED BANKS AND MYSELF DID NOT HAVE THE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, SOME WAY OR OTHER IT BECAME MY PROBLEM TO SOLVE!"

"I OBTAINED ONE OF THE LARGE METAL CANS WITH LID FROM THE MESS HALL AND A ROLL OF TOILET PAPER AND PLACED THE CAN AT THE REAR OF THE BOMB BAYS. ALL WERE ADVISED THAT IT WAS TO REMAIN THERE!"

"OFF WE WENT AND ALL THE WAY UP THEY ALL TOOK TURNS GOING TO THE 'CAN.' FORTUNATELY THE CAN STAYED IN PLACE EVEN THROUGHOUT THE BOMB RUN. ON THE WAY BACK I WAS ADVISED THAT THE CAN HAD TO BE DISPENSED WITH. I ASKED ONE OF THE GUNNERS TO PUT THE LID ON TIGHT AFTER WHICH I OPENED THE BOMB BAY DOORS-THE DEVIL IN ME MADE ME DO THIS-AND USED THE BOMBSIGHT TO AIM AT POOR KLAGENFURT!"

"AT THE PROPER TIME, I TOLD THE GUNNER TO KICK THE CAN OUT AND OUT IT WENT-THE LID CAME OFF, AS I HAD HOPED, ON THE WAY DOWN!"

"CERTAIN RESIDENTS OF KLAGENFURT MUST HAVE WONDERED WHY THE RAIN SUDDENLY TURNED BROWN!

THE CAN STRUCK A HOUSE DOING ONLY 'JUICY' DAMAGE!"

"I ADVISED THE AILING MEMBERS OF THE CREW THAT THEY WOULD 'HAVE TO HAND IN THERE' UNTIL WE REACHED CERIGNOLA, ITALY, THE HOME BASE OF OUR 727<sup>TH</sup> B-24 SQUADRON!...OH, YES, WE EARLIER DELIVERED 8 500-LB. BOMBS-ALL RIGHT ON TARGET!"

"I DID FINE ON THE FIRST TWO BOMBINGS WITH MISSES IN THE 50 TO 60 FOOT RANGE. IT SEEMED A SNAP SINCE ALL RUNS WERE ON THE SAME HEADING. COURSE AND RATE SETTINGS WERE PRETTY WELL ESTABLISHED AFTER THE FIRST RUN. HOWEVER, MY THIRD BOMB HIT SOME 300 TO 400 FEET SHORT. I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT UNTIL THE PHOTOGRAPHER TOLD ME THAT THE BOMB TUMBLED ALL THE WAY DOWN! APPARENTLY IT HADN'T BEEN COMPLETELY FILLED WITH SAND. ANYHOW, THAT'S MY EXCUSE.

"OUR BASE COMMANDER WAS SO UPSET WITH OUR PERFORMANCE THAT HE ORDERED OUR PLANES BACK TO DEMING THAT SAME AFTERNOON. THEREFORE WE MISSED THE BANQUET THAT EVENING AND DIDN'T RECEIVE THE "PICKLE BARREL" MEMENTO. IN FACT I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS SUCH A SOUVENIR GIVEN UNTIL I READ THE CHARLES BAUGHN ARTICLE [JUL 1986 CROSSHAIRS]. HOWEVER, I DO HAVE AN "OUTSTANDING BOMBARDIER" CERTIFICATE.



“BY THE WAY, WILL SZABO’S COMMENT ABOUT HOW WELL HIS COHORTS FROM KIRTLAND ALWAYS DID IN THE OLYMPIC CONTESTS [Pg. 11, JUL. 86 CROSSHAIRS] WAS CERTAINLY ACCURATE AS FAR AS THE 6<sup>TH</sup> OLYMPIC CONTEST WAS CONCERNED. THE SCHOOL FINISHED IN THIS ORDER: ALBUQUERQUE, CHILDRESS, VICTORVILLE, BIG SPRING, MIDLAND, DEMING, ROSWELL AND SAN ANGELO.”

“WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IS ‘WHO OUT THERE IS WALKING AROUND WITH MY PICKLE BARREL!’”

Tuesday, 13 March 1945

Flew No. 12 today. We bombed Regensburg Main M/Y, Germany. 45 flak guns, but saw no flak. Saw some flak on way back over Selje, Yugo. Dropped 8 - 500 lbs. bombs. Flew Deputy Lead in C-2 position. P.F.F. Dayton (P) and his crew, Adams (CP), Fowler (N). Flew in #12 an "L". My crew, minus Mel, who was D.N.I.F., flew in C-6 & 3. Received multi letters from Mom.

Wednesday, 14 March 1945.

Spent a lazy day today. Signed pay voucher.. Went out to plane at 10:30 for ditching instructions - putting in reinforcing ribs in bomb bays. Group practiced for parade on Friday - presentation of its 3<sup>rd</sup> citation.

Thursday, 15 March 1945.

Went to Target Ident. Today. Had A-6 Bomb Trainer (the new one at 3 P.M. One swell trainer. Fred flew for 3<sup>rd</sup> day in a row. Crew has 11 missions, Fred & Rog 10, Mel 5, & myself 12. They flew today - a milk run to Klagenfurt.

and his crew-Anderson (N), in C-4 position in #12 an L. Only 12 bursts of flak seen to our rear after bombs away. Graz was an alternate of the primary-Brucls [Brussels?]. Two ships in 461<sup>st</sup> collided over Adriatic on way back-one crashed-other headed towards Zara. My crew flew in D-5 position.

Friday, 16 March 1945.

Rog & crew, not Mel flew again. (4<sup>th</sup> time in 4 days for Fred & 3 for crew). They had a rough time at Mucslira [?] illegible. Was supposed to fly lead tomorrow but Dep. Instead. Went to Cerignola in jeep with Lt. Voisch & Russell to get A.G.O. pics taken. Saw movie "Conflict" - Bogart - excellent.

Saturday, 17 March 1945.

Briefed for Bratislava an "Able" plan & Vienna on Baker - stand down - multi practice mission. Flew in lead ship #16 (latest "L"). Pilots - Dayton and Marable - Bombardier, Me, Bontell (N). Then[?] 20 bombs on Range #7 - Formation of 7 ships. Dropped only 4 bombs due to air accident - Nozuioli's [?] wing knocked off Maj. Lather's rudder - completely & Nozuiols landed without rudder control. Had meeting with Capt. Pronty, Air Insp. & Harvell's crew 178. Rations today. I hit head beyond words when planes collided.

Tuesday, 17 March 1945.

Had pic taken with lead crew Johnnie Dayton (P). Didn't do much all day. Dayton is a great pilot and we work well together.

Sunday, 18 March 1945.

Briefed for Linz (Baker) and Gyar (Able) - stand down- Dep. Lead in "Charlie". Went to church. Rained most of the day. Monday, 19 March 1945

Flew #13 today. Bombed M/Y at Muhlsdorf, Germany - no flak. Dropped 40 - 100 lb. G.P. Bombs. I flew as Deputy Lead in I-2. A visual run - we splattered the target. Bontell, lead bomb, forgot his tables. I flew with Doherty (P), Adam (CP) and Crommelin (N). Fred flew with Pohl & crew. Rog & Fred & crew scheduled tomorrow. Took "hot" shower (& bed).

Tuesday, 20 March 1945.

Rog, Fred & crew flew to Wels today - plastered the place. I went to Target Ident. at 0930. Played catch with Mel in P.M. and then to A-2 bomb trainer at 3 P.M.-5 P.M. with Leatherwood.

Wednesday, 21 March 1945.

Flew #14 today. Bombed M/Y at Brucls [Brussels] Austria. Multi flak - accurate. Dropped 4 - 1000 lb. bombs. I flew as lead bomb in Fox-1. I flew with Dayton (P), Anderson (CP) Fowler (N) and their crew. Was a P.F.F. run - badly screwed up & made it only about a 3 minute run. I saw a small break in undercast & saw target for 30 seconds so synchronized. A very fast unorthodox run. I hit the target!! Saw movie "Animal"

56 guns but only 10 bursts of flak seen. Linz was smoked over on way up also other places. On way back saw - 24 bursts of flak at a place in Austria near Klagenfurt. Bombing alt. 25000'. Flew as Deputy Bomb in F-2 pos. - Doherty (P), Casperson (CP) and Dibley (N). We dropped 36 100 lb. & Rag. Clusters (six to a cluster). Hit the airdrome on the head. A visual run. Drake was lead. A long haul 82 hrs.

D.F.C. awarded to me for destroying target with unusual run.

Kingdom" - Ann Sheridan, Dennis Morgan. Censored mail.

Thursday, 22 March 1945.

Went to Group at 0830 to have a picture taken for ident. card. At 0930 photo ident. at Group - cancelled - came back. My bombing of Brucls [Brussels] gave Group

64.6% hits and raised our score to 33% for Group average. My entire crew flew to Vienna today.

Friday, 23 March 1945.

Didn't do much of anything today. Banks flew with Harwell's crew to Vienna - same target - again today. He is one up on us now. Rog, Mel & Fred minus crew - on guard duty - fly again tomorrow. Rog was "duty officer" today. Got beer & coke rations tonight. Rog flying in #9 position again - makes us mad to miss missions.

Saturday, 24 March 1945.

Got rations today. Rog, Mel & Fred flew today. Goofed off all day.

Sunday, 25 March 1945.

Flew #15 today. Bombed parked aircraft on Prague/Kbely Airdrome.

Sammy was our young Italian who took our laundry home & kept our "house" clean.

Monday, 26 March 1945.

Yesterday, I met John Carpenter at briefing. He is in 725<sup>th</sup>. He said Ronald Carey is in 724<sup>th</sup>. Bomb trainer - A-2 - with Baum from 10-12. Rog & Mel flew weather ship. Fred went on mission up near Vienna - no flak - his 17<sup>th</sup>. Had Skeet

Wednesday, 28 March 1945.

Had day off today.

Thursday, 29 March 1945.

Went to Foggia. Received two packages - Mom & Hershey's Co. bought Capt. Salt's house.

(3) We were on a practice bombing mission on a clear day with six planes. Major Lather, Squadron C.O. was flying the ship, Suddenly, while I was zeroing in on the practice target, another (on our left) plane moved in too close and his right wing took off one of our rudders, and bent our left wing like a broken bird wing. The impact threw me over the Norden. Major Lather did an excellent job of skidding the plane around and making a long approach back to the field. The other plane managed to land with half of his wing at a 30 degree angle and no rudder control. The other B-24 contained 15<sup>th</sup> A.F. officers who wanted me to demonstrate "ship bombing". We were very low to do the demo. Luckily both planes returned to base.

Friday, 30 March 1945.

I am against moving into Salt's house - not as good as ours even though it does have a shower. Did nothing all day long.

Saturday, 31 March 1945.

Photo Ident. at 0930 New training schedule out - similar R.T.U.

Sunday, 1 April 1945.

Went to sunrise services at control tower. Very nice. Rest of day to myself.

Monday, 2 April 1945.

Flew #16 today. Bombed railroad cars in M/Y in St. Polten, Austria. No flak. Flew C-1 position - lead bombardier. Dayton (P), Menien (CP), Packard & Fowler (N). We dropped ten 500 lb. bombs - visual run. Bombing altitude 18000'. Bull's eye!! Saw ground damage in towns en route to target done by advancing Russians. Saw airdrome near target loaded with Luftwaffe. I was awarded another air medal.

Tuesday, 3 April 1945.

The bombing of St. Polten yesterday gave our Group 100% and then gave me a cluster to the air medal. Started "school" today at 0830. Had Ditching, First Aid, & Military Customs (?); C-1 Auto-Pilot, Bombing & Arange [?] in P.M. Had A-2 trainer 1300-1500 but trainer broke. Two new Bombardiers arrived today.

Wednesday, 4 April 1945.

Flew a practice mission - 16 bombs on Range 7 at 18000' - Dayton (P), Dufault (CP). Fort St. Polten raid, Capt. Zraick discovered an error and discovered that I did 100% of bombing - Group percent 83.6. Went to Intelligence at 3 P.M.

Thursday, 5 April 1945.

Goofed off all day. Had A-6 trainer, but it was out.

Friday, 6 April 1945.

Flew #17 today. Bombed the Brescia Small Arms Plant at Brescia, N. Italy. With 18-250 lb. G.P.'s. Bombed alt 19060 ft. No flak. Flew C-1 position. Dayton (P), Reshkin (CP) & Fowler (N). Lead Bombardier (ME). Visual run. Bull's eye - 100% score for "C" flight. Able flt. missed. One bomb held up - B-10 shackle [?]. Am achieving no end of fame. Ha!! But do I want it??? Found out Salt's house no good so am selling it. Radio "multi bore." Fired Sammy. Air Medal [illegible] #7.



Saturday, 7 April 1945.

91.7% for Group on yesterday's raid. Sold Salt's house for \$40. to Lt. Boye. Took our radio batteries to 60<sup>th</sup> service to be recharged. Transferred fuel. Had A-6 bomb trainer 0800-1000. Rog & Mel flew - brought bombs back - no mission credit. Am scheduled to fly F-1 tomorrow.

Sunday, 8 April 1945.

Flew #18 today. Supposed to bomb Bronzolo, N. Italy, but weather forced us to go to a weather alternate. Group picked Klagenfurt, Austria. An hour before target time we lost #4 engine & had to abort from F-1 position. Drake & Doherty took over. Since we could never quite catch up, I made a manual run on Klagenfurt - swell run - my bombs walked across yard destroying train cars & tracks. One bomb dropped a few minutes later taking off bomb bay door. I think Dayton is getting D.F.C! Dropped 8 in Adriatic prior to run. No flak - visual. Am big hero now - Ha!! Group changed mind & bombed Gorizia - only Able Flight hit yard. Used 250 lbs. bombs. Banks was my nose turret navigator. Am aiding in Italy tomorrow by a frag mission near Bologna. Had big secret meeting to night M.G.M. studios took movies of us.

Monday, 9 April 1945.

Big briefing & M.G.M. took multi pictures. Flew #19 today. Aided big push near Bologna, Italy by fraging enemy gun positions. We dropped 30 - 100 lb. (6 bomb) frag clusters. I flew with Dayton (P), Adams (CP), Fowler (N), Pelsner (NN) in F-1 pos., but did not synchronize. Bombing alt. 20000 ft. Visual run - very satisfactory. The ground troops took no changes - used white smoke, flak at 15,000 ft. white panels (arrows, T's etc.), red smoke & neon lights to mark the way. Little evening flak. Am told Cessna may make flight lead soon. One of my togglers on left dropped bombs too soon before I did. (see note).

Monday 4-9-45

Col. asked me to come to a big meeting at Group Hdqts. It is the plan to finish off the Germans and end the war in Italy. They got an idea last night to have me fly prone in a plexiglass nose of the P-38 and fly over the front lines near Bologna and check locations of Germans on north side and allies on south side. Allies are very nervous for fear frag clusters will land on them. All sorts of lights and arrows to guide (Ha!).

To the target and Lt. Leatherwood still screwed up. Even so those that dropped off me, all bit perfectly. Day's later an army officer came to Group to thank us and tell me what it had been like, etc.

Tuesday, 10 April 1945.

Flew #20 today. It was the same as yesterday, except we bombed area north of yesterday's area. Very successful. Heard our group dropped 3000 yds. short yesterday. F-1 pos. same crew and bomb load. No trouble - Syn [illegible] for my own rate.

Wednesday, 11 April 1945.

Capt. Salt & Fowler finished yesterday. Have been asked to go to Bari to school but I don't want to go at all - hope I can.

He was supposed to wait for my signal. He claimed it was an "accident" but it caused the Bombardier on his left to drop. They hit a Polish unit moving up to front. Big 15<sup>th</sup> A.F. investigation. His 3<sup>rd</sup> "accident" and he got off with it. Lt. Leatherwood - we called him Leatherhead. He could talk his way out of anything. get out of it. Major Lather (C.O.) told me today he was thinking of using me for Group leading. Oh, oh! Haugley, had [illegible] also mentioned it. Had skeet at 10 A.M. - got 5 out of 10 birds. Got haircut & shave. Had A-2 bomb trainer with McIverney [?] 1300-1500 then took a shower.



HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE E-MFC-alm

APO 520 US ARMY

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE COMBAT TRAINING SCHOOL

BOMBARDIER PROGRAM

I. The program outline below is the schedule for the week. It must be remembered that the schedule is very flexible and may be changed.

MONDAY	A.M.	Pathfinder Theory and Technique - Lt. Groban
	P.M.	1. Flak Analysis - Capt. VANCE (Combined) 2. Planning of Combined Operations- Lt. Col.KUTSCHERA
WED		
TUESDAY	A.M.	Norden Bombsight, Gyroscopic Principles, Analysis of Bombsight Errors, Malfunctions and Maintenance - Mr. JARREAU
	P.M.	1. Intelligence - Col. BARR, Lt. Col. MAGILL or Capt. MENKEL 2. Armament - Capt. HISS
Tuesday	A.M.	1. Navigation in the XV AAF - Lt. DOWNEY 2. Offset Bombing - Lt. CULVER
<del>Wednesday</del>		
	P.M.	1. Bombing Accuracy - Dr. TARSHIS 2. Target Material and Its Use - Lt. CULVER
THURSDAY	A.M.	Bombs and Fuzes - Major RANDAL ( <i>gave me a nose bomb fuse as a s souvenir. After War I gave it to Elmira Police Dept. as I was afraid to Have it around children.</i> )
	P.M.	1. Bombs and Fuzes - Major RANDAL 2. Metro - Lt. SCHULER (Combined)
FRIDAY	A.M.	Review and Examination
	P.M.	Critique - Lt. CULVER

II. REGULATIONS:

1. Truck will leave the Miramare Hotel at 0815 and 1315 hours for school, the Bombardiers catching only their own truck.
2. All lectures must be attended; absentees will be considered AWOL.
3. Officers will conduct themselves accordingly at all times.

4. Officers will have a notebook and pencil at each lecture.

RESTRICTED

C-HDR-ru

HEADQUARTERS  
451<sup>ST</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)  
APO 520, US ARMY

SPECIAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 96

14 APRIL 1945

EXTRACT

2. Fol named 0, 727<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (H), are placed on TDY with Hq 15<sup>th</sup> AF for a period of approximately six (6) days, eff 15 Apr 45, for the purpose of attending FAF Combat Training School WP via govt mtr T and/or mil acft retg upon arrival thereat to Personnel Controller, Rm 114, Hq 15<sup>th</sup> AF, not later than 1400 hrs 15 Apr 45. Upon comp of TDY 0 will return to proper sta and orgn. No per diem. TDN. (Auth: VO CG 49<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wg (N)).

1<sup>ST</sup> LIEUT AUSTIN F. HARRINGTON, 02 070 027 AC

2<sup>ND</sup> LIEUT ROBERT L. HENBEST, 02 001 803 AC

BY ORDER OF COLONEL STEFONOWICZ:

OFFICIAL:

HENRY D. RICHARDSON  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

HENRY D. RICHARDSON  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

RESTRICTED

Thursday, 12 April 1945.

Ground school in A.M. Got pictures today from 60<sup>th</sup> service. My crew flew on a mission today. Dayton went to Rome which means I may not fly. They are trying to slow me down. Oh, oh - may give me a crack at Group Lead.

Friday, 13 April 1945.

Was scheduled to lead - stand down. Flew a practice bombing mission on Pianosa - 10 bombs with Laterza (B); Doherty (P); Sercomb (NV); Casperson (CP). Roosevelt's death announced - wonder what outcome will be.

Saturday, 14 April 1945.

Flew #21 today. Bombed a pin point target - Malcontenta Ammunition Factory, near Venice, Italy with nine 500 lbs. G.P.'s and one propaganda bomb. Flew F-1 position - Doherty (P); Casperson (CP) Mitchell (N); Grockmal (nose turret nav.). slight flak - 54 guns - hit target well. Other flights did very poor. My 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. is merely waiting for time element to expire. Bomb attitude 23000! Strong tail wind. Golly - what success I am having - makes me feel good to know I can do it. Came back to find orders waiting for me to go to Bari to school for a week. Darn it. Harrington, a navigator is also going. Group C.O. says this is a reward for hitting targets.

Sunday, 15 April 1945.

At 0930 Capt. Prontey flew Lt. Harrington and I to Bari in the B-25 to attend a week of school. We are staying at the Miramare Hotel. We start classes at 0800 tomorrow. - We went to the P.X. to get our rations - boy, what we got - 7 packs of cigs; a can of juice; cigars; a can of peanuts; a package of hard candy; 4 candy bars; 2 packs (roll) candy; 2 packs of gum & anything else we wanted not in the line of food. Pretty nice!!! We walked around town awhile. Food in the officers restaurants is superb. Went to see "Between the Girls" (Kay Francis & Barrymore) & "San Diego I Love You" Jon Hall & Louis Albrittons. In P.M. went to officer's club & had some ice cream and colas. Also, found names of some Elmirans I know - F.K. Izard

steak dinner (\$4), then came back & went to dance at Oriente Hotel for awhile. Got another big set of rations tonight - 7 packs of cigs, two packs of gum, 7 candy bars, bag of pretzels, pack of candy, can of peanuts, can of juice, 4 cigars. Boy!

Monday, 16 April 1945.

1<sup>st</sup> day of school. In A.M. we & the Nav's had a lecture on Pathfinder Theory & Technique - very interesting. In P.M. had lectures on Flak Analysis & Planning of combined operations - rather boring & of little value. Got shave. Went to Oriente Hotel to visit two P-38 pilot buddies of Harrington's - stayed there for movie, "Here Come The Waves" - B. Hutton & B. Crosby. Afterward had coffee & chocolate donuts - delicious.

Tuesday, 17 April 1945.

Got up at 0735. Went to Ground School in A.M. & P.M. Off-set Bombing & Target Material in A.M. & Intelligence & Armament in P.M. Bought multi 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. bars. More ice cream at club. Went to see "The Invisible Man's Revenge" - Jon Hall.

Wednesday, 18 April 1945.

Got up at 0740. Ground school again. Had lecture on the Norden in A.M. & Bombing Accuracy in P.M. Took hot shower at Red Cross Officer's Club & had some dee-licious chocolate ice cream. Went outside of town to beautiful big Allied Officer's Club & had a dee-licious

Note: at 15<sup>th</sup> A.F. Investigation - Smith finally stood up & confessed he gave me false levels. Photos showed mission would have been on Roveretto M/Y in Brenner Paso [illegible] 18 flak guns gave us no trouble. Flew C-1 pos. - R. Smith (P) Rothbone (CP) Harrington (N) & Conlon (NTN). Mission failed my bombs hit to left & over from M.P.I. - 2500 ft. off. Mission was all screwed up - Nav. In nose got lost - the nav. Didn't know what he was supposed to do - the pilot was all screwed up - all in all, made a P.D.I. run - got false levels, etc. - missed (0%) Smith (P) really screwed up. He had interrogation at Hdqts.

Thursday, 19 April 1945.

Had classes all day - Bombs & Fuzes was best one. Got a souvenir from Major Randell - a time fuze. Got some ice cream, then off to a movie.

Friday, 20 April 1945.

Review and then a proficiency exam in bombing - got 83%. Had a critique in P.M. Went to see Bette Davis in "Old Acquaintance." Missed chance to come back by plane due to Capt. Williams forgetting us. Made arrangements to catch truck. Saturday, 21 April 1945.

Truck full so went to airbase. Learned that Sqdn. Was sending the non-op down. Marable (P) McNeely (CP). Sercombe (N) came along- also Chalfen, who went to Brandeis on pass to see a friend. Harrington & I took a sail boat ride on Adriatic for \$1 a piece. Returned to base at 5 P.M. Learned that Fred has 29 missions.

A Major was all.

Wednesday, 25 April 1945.

The crew flew to Linz today - rough mission, I imagine. I flew a practice - 6 ship bomb & form. - mission on range #7 - P.D.I. runs - poorly done - Cox (P); Doherty (CP). Combat mission returned - Stresley was shot down & Cessna & my whole crew is missing. I am sure they are safe somewhere - They lost all 4 superchargers. I hope they are safe. Very lonely without them.

Thursday, 26 April 1945.

Learned last night at 6 P.M. that my crew is safe at Zara. Flew a practice bombing mission on Pianosa Island today – lone ship – 20000 ft. – seven bombs. Marable (P); Holey [?] (CP); Feinstein (NV) I got vertigo on Marable's dive from 20000'. Mel 16; Rog 23; Enlisted men 22; me 21. Am burned up – they want me to succeed Haughey. I think I shall deliberately miss the next target – I hate to do it – am not the type, but if the crew leaves without me, I shall be terribly lonely – more than one can imagine as all my friends are also finishing up. But Sqdn Bombardier will be great, and promotion to Capt.

Sunday, 22 April 1945

Flew practice mission – they say I need practice before I dare fly a combat mission. Ha!! Boy – am I PO'd – am getting such a raw deal – to anyone else it might be wonderful – not to me. Did not bomb at all – brought bombs back. Smith (P) Rathbone (CP). Took shower. Poor Haughey – he knows how I feel – he can't face me – but he has to get someone so he can leave – guess I am the goat; wants me to take over as 727 Sqdn. Bombardier.

Monday, 23 April 1945.

A-6 Bomb trainer in P.M. Rest of day to myself – nothing accomplished.

Tuesday, 24 April 1945.

Flew mission #22 today – finally. We dropped 10 – 500 lb. G.P. bombs.

Friday, 27 April 1945.

Went to Ground School this A.M. – Target Study & “General Situation.” Capt. Zraick gave us some good rumors. Read in Group paper “Ad Lib” where I got the D.F.C. for my mission on Brucls [Brussels], Austria – March 21<sup>st</sup>. Briefed for D-1 lead on raid to Leoben, Austria. Last night – stand down.

Saturday, 28 April 1945.

At 2 P.M. I was given the D.F.C. – pinned on my blouse by Col. Stefonowitz (sp?). This was for my Brucls [Brussels] mission. Another “stand down” for tomorrow. Got our “meager rations” today.

Sunday, 29 April 1945..

Flew a practice camera bombing mission. R. Smith (P); Rathbone (CP); Conlon (N). Got our battery for the radio. No mail.

Monday, 30 April 1945.

At 0800 went in 725<sup>th</sup> plane with Lt. Aarons (NV) and several other Mickey men & bombardiers to work on the “supersonic” trainer (a “mickey” – bomb trainer). Quite a gadget. Fred & I are on orders to go to Rome for four days. Was paid \$142 to night. Was supposed to lead tomorrow's mission, darn the luck.

Tuesday, 1 May 1945.

Learned yesterday - Gizzi is in 454 B.G. Fred Banks, Casperson & I came to Rome on orders for three days. Arrived here around 11 P.M. Saw Rome - St. Peters dome from the air. Took an hour to get here. P.S. - today's mission was a "stand down." In Rome we stay at Savia Hotel - quite nice. Banks & I have a double room with "beds." Food pretty good. Had to pay \$3 for room & meals - apiece. Rained all P.M. Beautiful Red Cross Club - modern - of marble. Multi ruins & sculptures. Landed at Campino Airport. Multi "bad" women [?]. Saw Lt. Jackson - Bomb Cadet at Midland. Went to Red Cross Theatre (beautiful) & saw "Dangerous Night."

Wednesday, 2 May 1945.

Went on Red Cross Tour at 09:15 in a big bus. Saw Rome's biggest park, the Coliseum, Mamertine Prison (Peter & Paul); The

To 3000' at 230 mph. Have A-2 trainer at 2:30 P.M. Crew flew back from Zara in a C-47 - arrived here at 2 P.M. They had quite a time - hydraulic system shot out; 50 flak holes; an engine on fire & then feathered; had to crank down the gear & flaps. Cessna & Ransdell put in for D.F.C.'s.

Thursday, 3 May 1945.

Went on another tour today. Spent some more time on what we saw yesterday - also saw St. Marie Maggiore Church plus a couple Piazzas. In P.M. walked around - had some ice cream. Haven't been able to sell any cigarettes - darn it. Traded 2 packs & a pack of Dentine gum for 8 photos at 50 cents each. Saw "For Whom the Bells Toll" again - at the ENSA Supercinema. Nice out today.

Friday, 4 May 1945.

Got up late - oh! Wonderful bed! I finally got up nerve to sell 3 cartons of cigs - scared to death when I did it (\$40). Chalfen & Cessna arrived in Rome late so we did not see them. We came back in B-25 with Maj. Lather & Bernstein. I found I was a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. upon my return & also Chalfen. Our E.M. are Staff Sgts. The E.M. go to Rome Monday A.M. Came back to find field observing "Malaria Discipline" - Beds, nets, skin repellent, etc. Ugh!

R E S T R I C T E D  
H E A D Q U A R T E R S  
451<sup>ST</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)  
A.P.O. #520            U . S . A R M Y

30 April 1945

SPECIAL ORDERS  
NUMBER 112

EXTRACT

3. Fol named 0 orgns indicated WP fr pres sta to Rome, Italy, 1 May 45 for a period of three (3) days for recreational purposes RUAT to Rome Area (AAF/RC (Adiress 74 Via Veneto). Upon compl of TDY 4 May 45, 0 will report to Ciampino Airport not later than 1300 hrs. TBGAA and TBMAA. TDN. No funds involved.

CAPTAIN	STANLEY W. JACKSON,	0 675 595, 724 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
1 <sup>st</sup> LT	ZACHARY T. BUNCH,	0 804 294, 724 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
1 <sup>st</sup> LT	CHARLES V. WILLIAMS,	0 723 909, 724 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
2 <sup>nd</sup> LT	JOHN A. ADAMS,	01 692 866, 725 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
2 <sup>nd</sup> LT	LEO P. MURPHY, JR.,	0 830 668, 725 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
CAPTAIN	MELVIN A. SOSSAMAN,	01 044 392, 726 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
1 <sup>st</sup> LT	JAMES N. ESBERSHADE,	01 998 780, 726 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
1 <sup>st</sup> LT	ROBERT S. WESTRUP,	01 998 731, 726 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
1 <sup>st</sup> LT	FREDERICK D. BANKS,	02 069 907, 727 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
1 <sup>st</sup> LT	JAMES T. CASPERSON,	0 771 296, 727 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)
2 <sup>nd</sup> LT	ROBERT L. HENBEST,	02 001 903, 727 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (H)

BY ORDER OF COLONEL STEFONOWITZ:

OFFICIAL:

HENRY D. RICHARDSON  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Adjutant

HENRY D. RICHARDSON  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

*[Fred & I go to Rome in Col.'s B-25]*

*2 May - Fred and I were wandering along Eastside of St. Peters and decided to join a group of top officers from various countries and were escorted upstairs by Swiss Guards into a beautiful room. To our surprise we had an audience with Pope Pius X.*



Saturday, 5 May 1945.

Had a physical exam this A.M. Wonder what's up? Hope we leave soon - am tired of Italy since I can't get any missions in anymore. Got rations today. Am going to try to get some combat pictures for a bottle of whiskey tomorrow.

Sunday, 6 May 1945.

Flew practice mission today - was pulled off as though it was a real mission. Got up at 3:30 A.M. Had flimsy briefing, etc. The entire 15<sup>th</sup> A.F. performed the mission. We flew down around S. Italy, then up the west coast & bombed Air Force plots [?] at Caserta then crossed Italy and bombed headquarters building of 15<sup>th</sup> A.A.F. in Bari (all camera bombing)). Guess it was to [illegible]. Quite hot out today. The E.M. did not get their 3-day pass to Rome. Banks, Ransdell, Miller & I rigged up an oxygen bottle for a fuel container for the stove. Whiskey rations tonight - I got Cessna's - \$5.00 total two bottles.

Monday, 7 May 1945.

Went to ground school this A.M. Air Crew Discipline, Naval & A/C recognition. History of Heavy Bombardment. At 1300 went on a Practice Bombing mission - Pianosa.

Roman Forum, Monument to King Victor Emmanuel II; Keats & Shelley's graves; Tiber River & Horatio's Bridge; St. Peter's - beautiful; & Pope Pius XII Sistine Chapel. In P.M. took walk all over town. Saw movie. Hitler said to be dead - German arrives in N. Italy to surrendered. Had surprise audience with Pope Pius XII.

"V-E Day" Tuesday, 8 May 1945.

On the radio yesterday heard broadcast that Germany has surrendered. Ahhh!!! War ended officially today. V.E. day. Have today and tomorrow free but are confined to the post. Our whole crew including Banks are to stay with group. Cessna returned from Rome last night. Mel stayed. Acquired a set (31) of beautiful pictures of combat for a bottle of whiskey. Hot today - sunbathed.

Wednesday, 9 May 1945.

Had today off again - slept all day - sunbathed. Still have my cold. Everyday preparations being made for our departure.

Thursday, 10 May 1945.

Went to Group for Armament Class - very good. Had flying equipment check. Went into "Suntan's" (uniform) today.

TRANSIENT OFFICER'S MESS PASS  
 No. 003858

This card will be issued to all transients at APO 621  
 The holder may purchase all items on the reverse  
 side plus beverages, ice cream, magazines, books, native  
 goods and other unseasoned items, but not clothing or  
 equipment. certify that I have not procured ration for the  
 period covered below.

NAME: HANLOW S. STEINBERG  
 RANK: 1st Lt.  
 UNIT: 125th AAF Base Unit  
 ADDRESS: 125th AAF Base Unit, North African Division, Air Transport Command, APO 621

Valid for the 7 days from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Issued by \_\_\_\_\_

WAR DEPARTMENT No. \_\_\_\_\_ P. T. A. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Finance Department RECEIPT FOR FUNDS TRANSMITTED TO UNITED STATES

WAR DEPARTMENT No. \_\_\_\_\_ P. T. A. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Finance Department RECEIPT FOR FUNDS TRANSMITTED TO UNITED STATES

RECEIVED IN CASH FROM: 1st Lt. Robert H. Heabest 0-2001903  
 (PRINT IN DARK INK, FULL NAME AND ASN OF BENEFITARY)

THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE DOLLARS AND NO/100 CENTS  
 PAY TO: Mr. Edward J. Heabest  
 423 Country Club Drive  
 Elmhurst, New York

WHICH SUM I HAVE PASSED TO THE CREDIT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND HOLD MYSELF ACCOUNTABLE THEREFOR.

RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGED:  
 [Signature]

DISBURSING OFFICER

NOTE: IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE BENEFITARY VERIFY NAME AND ADDRESS OF PAYEE PRIOR TO SUBMISSION OF THIS DATA TO THE FINANCE DEPT.  
 Bldg. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Rm. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Bed No. \_\_\_\_\_

HEADQUARTERS  
 125th AAF BASE UNIT  
 NORTH AFRICAN DIVISION  
 AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND

TRANSIENT OFFICER'S MESS PASS  
 Good for one meal only  
 Price .30

Good for one Night's Lodging--All Transients  
 Sleeping More Than One Night Must Re-tag  
 at before noon or your bed will be sold.  
 Take the bed assigned you.  
 Plans dependent upon your location  
 being available.  
 Bldg. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Rm. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Bed No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

To be executed in triplicate.  
 Original to Finance Officer.  
 Duplicate to Personnel Officer.  
 Triplicate to Remitter.

WAR DEPARTMENT  
 FINANCE DEPARTMENT  
 FORM NO. 31 (REVISED)

WAR DEPARTMENT  
 Finance Department No. 156  
 P.T.A.

RECEIVED IN CASH FROM: 2nd Lt. Robert L. Heald  
 RECEIPT FOR FUNDS TRANSMITTED TO UNITED STATES  
 (COMPLETION AND FILING OF THIS RECEIPT IS MANDATORY)

\$ 150.00 P.T.A.

PAID TO: Robert L. Heald  
 (PRINT IN CASE: NAME, FULL NAME AND JOB OR SERVICE)  
 DOLLARS AND 00/100 CENTS.

FOR: Leitch, Air Corps

NOTE: PAYABLE TO THE ORDER OF THE UNITED STATES, AND HOLD RECEIPT ACCOUNTABLE THEREFOR.  
 \* STRIKE OUT WORDS NOT APPLICABLE.  
 NOTE: IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE RECEIPT'S VENUE NAME AND ADDRESS OF PAYER PRIOR TO REGISTRATION OF THIS DATA TO THE FINANCE DEPT.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BARRACKS: 12 BED: 24

RATION CARD: A.T.C. ONLY

CIGARETTES: 100

CHEWING GUM: \_\_\_\_\_

RAZOR BLADES: 1

SOFT DRINKS: \_\_\_\_\_

BEER: \_\_\_\_\_

SOAP: \_\_\_\_\_

CANDY: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS SLIP NECESSARY FOR PURCHASE

Friday, 11 May 1945 & Sat. 12, 1945.

Doing very little, but fill out forms, etc. in preparation to leave.

Sunday, 13 May 1945.

Went into Cerignola - beeg [?] big Ha! For \$97.00 sold 4 cartons of cigs (\$12. @); 8 bars Lifeboy (20 cents); 1 pr. Low cuts; 2 pr. G.I.'s shoes; 1 pr. G.I. pants; 2 G.I. shirts; All told about \$115. Profit. Sending home \$365.00 P.T.A. only allowed to keep \$50. On person. Supposed to see movie "2 down 1 to go" last nite.

Monday, 14 May 1945.

P.E.O. check in A.M. I typed forms up all P.M. Got weeks rations.

Tuesday, 15 May 1945.

In A.M. went to Group for "screening" - check all records. Capt. Fenton says it is almost certain we are to go home. I sure do hope so. They changed their minds again. All complete C. Crews are to fly home - not as a Group - the rest to go by boat. Haughey made Capt. - also Marable. When I was aviation student it was great they found I could type (no K.P. or Guard Duty) Now I work while the others goof off. Oh well! I like working.

Single ship - 20000 ft. - 10 bombs. Made only two runs - C-1 out of order - besides, was too cold - 18 degrees C. Ha! Capt. Gulleag (P) Dufault (CP) plus an NV. Learned that Cessna, Chalfen, crew - 2 are remaining over here & Banks goes home. Only 12 crews remaining. Cessna & Chalk - did not return from Rome tonight.

Wednesday, 16 May 1945.

Chapotan, gunnery officer made Capt. Goofed off in A.M. In P.M. I did some more typing for Capt. Curtiss this time - P.T.A. accounts. More rumors Made Expert in Pistol Range.

Thursday, 17 May 1945.

Went to Foggia at Cerignola. Saw Deterro & Hardebeck. Sold a pr. Of shoes, suntan pts. & 3 pks. of cigs for \$20.00 - robbed! Ha! Ha! Packed to leave.

Friday, 18 May 1945.

Chalfen went to town & acquired some P. Poor Sqdn insignia, but it'll have to do. I have a terrific summer cold. Am typing for Capt. Curtis again today. Received a box from Mom. Boys are having a party tonight. Liquid rations. 1 coke & 4 beers.

Saturday, 19 May 1945.

Still typing. Turned in mosquitoes net, 3 blankets & Q.M. bed roll. Got rations today. P Poor.

Sunday, 20 May 1945.

Typed all day. To Group for Pre-ocean briefing – start leaving Tues? I hope.

Monday, 21 May 1945.

Another day of “rest” – saw movie tonight. Laid in sun in P.M. Cessna has night flying tonight.

Tuesday, 22 May 1945.

Again – nothing done. Oh! How I wish we would leave. Sent home a box of clothes (2 sheets, 2 towels, jock-strap, toilet articles, sweat pants & sweat shirts, scarf) for \$1. Wonder if I shall ever see them again. Also, I repacked – wonder about my binocs [?].

Wednesday, 23 May 1945.

Tore down our “Casa” – only floor and walls left – took pictures. Sleep in open these days.

Thursday & Friday, 24 & 25 May 1945.

Awarded 4<sup>th</sup> Oak Leaf Cluster to Air Medal for April 6<sup>th</sup> mission – Brescia Arms Plant, Italy. Ransdell & Cessna got D.F.C.'s. Ground personnel leaves tomorrow also 7 Air Crews. We are to leave Sunday at 2 P.M. – have 6 extra men. Oh, my! Buried Binocs. Slept in operations Operations Thursday. Took our cots today so in the

Saturday, 26 May 1945

Everyone leaving but us. The 727<sup>th</sup> had two convoys of Ground Personnel leave at 12 noon & seven ships left leaving only about 100 air crew members. Ate chow over at 725<sup>th</sup>. Also Pohl, Owlsley [?] & some others went to 304<sup>th</sup> Gp. Slept in plane..

Sunday, 27 May 1945.

Loaded plane – six passengers & luggage and went to Giaia, Italy at 1355 closing the field. Sold an old pair of G.I. shoes plus a sweater I found for \$12 to the Gooks'. Took 45 min. to get to Giaia. Is said we will be out of here in two days – swell!!!! Good food.

Monday, 28 May 1945.

Did nothing today towards leaving. Went to see “Thunderhead” last night. Got P.X. rations.

Note: We were supposed to cross Atlantic at Dakar but I wanted to see Africa so said I smelled gas & convinced Cessna to go south. Hardebeck arrived here. Saw native grass hut villages on way to beach – what a “stink”!! Went to Permanent P.X. for ice cream & cokes. Went to movie “Experiment Perilous” – Hedy Lamarr.

Sunday, 27 May 1945.

Loaded plane - six passengers & luggage and went to Giaia, Italy at 1355 closing the field. Sold an old pair of G.I. shoes plus a sweater I found for \$12 to the Gooks'. Took 45 min. to get to Giaia. Is said we will be out of here in two days - swell!!!! Good food.

Monday, 28 May 1945.

Did nothing today towards leaving. Went to see "Thunderhead" last night. Got P.X. rations.

Note: We were supposed to cross Atlantic at Dakar but I wanted to see Africa so said I smelled gas & convinced Cessna to go south. Hardebeck arrived here. Saw native grass hut villages on way to beach - what a "stink"!! Went to Permanent P.X. for ice cream & cokes. Went to movie "Experiment Perilous" - Hedy Lamarr.

Tuesday, 29 May 1945.

Had medical checks & then record processing. Changed Lire into (\$59.50) yellow seal U.S. currency. In P.M. had clothing check. We're 3<sup>rd</sup> alternate to leave tomorrow. Are now 1<sup>st</sup> alt. Expect to leave Thurs. Ronnie Carey is here & expects to leave then also. Maybe we will go home together.

Wednesday, 30 May 1945.

Loaded ship (Proj. RG-0610-15) in A.M. I front bomb bays. Saw Errol Flynn in "Objective Burns" - very good. Hardebeck is here as Skinner's crew 461<sup>st</sup>.

Thursday, 31 May 1945.

Got up at 0500 to leave at 0800 in 2<sup>nd</sup> flight. Carey left - we didn't - had to have a 100 Air inspection pulled a plane - good thing too. We are now to leave tomorrow in 1<sup>st</sup> flight.

Friday, 1 June 1945.

Almost didn't leave today. The two passengers lacked clothing forms - we were in Flight I but left at 0935. Came by way of Tunis, Bari, Algiers, Obiaja (sp?), Iran to Marrakech, N. Africa. A long ride. 9 hrs. & 55 min. This

Plane tonight. Bags everywhere. Damn it. Rain tonight. They sent some air crews to 304<sup>th</sup> Wing today - also some ground personnel to Naples to the boat. What for - food - oh, oh!

Saturday, 2 June 1945.

Up at 0600 today. Ate breakfast; turned in bedding & came to ship while the others went to briefing. Leave for Dakar. I navigated today so that Fred could rest for ocean hop-did O.K. too. Came by way of pass in mts., Tindorf [?] Atar [?], St. Loins. Took 8 hrs. and 30 min. Almost didn't leave due to supercharger troubles. Got P.X. rations. Live in nice building. The natives here are coal black and wear the darndest dresses. In Mess Hall they wait on us - have black good luck charm.

Sunday, 3 June 1945.

Didn't take off for Natal-gas tank leak. Went through a Catalina Air-Sea Rescue ship parked net to ours. Are making plans to go from Dakar to Roberts Field & from there to Ascension Island; then Natal. Went swimming at beach - nice - but water salty-big waves

Monday, 4 June 1945.

Got up at 0230 to leave at 4 A.M. Was changed so back to bed again & up at 0700 to leave for Roberts Field, Liberia. Weather very bad. Hope to see famous rubber plantation there. Had a storm on way here. Lived in barracks with hatched roofs. Food was fairly good. Went to P.X. candy on ration. Went to big Firestone Rubber Plantation at 3:30 P.M.- saw rubber tires etc. Got samples of rubber (Latex) in its various states of purification - what a stink. Went to see T[illegible], movie "Bring on the Girls" with Eddie Bracken, June Haver, Veronica Lake. Then to bed (came by way of coast & Freetown).

Tuesday, 5 June 1945.

Left for Ascension Island at 0900. Took us 5 hrs. & 35 minutes. The island is just a volcanic mass - no grass or trees. Immense runways. We live in pre-fabricated barracks. Went through some rain en route. So far, we have had multi trouble with this B-24H (#67) - a leaky gas tank, instrument trouble & what not. The negroes at Dolsar were coal black, but the ones at Roberts Field, Liberia were not so black. What tough feet they must have to walk bare foot so much. They want cigarettes & "chomp, chomp" (gum). Ascension Is. (British - but over run with U.S. Army) is barren lava rocks except one spot - Green Mountain which has a rain cloud over it most of the time. A nice Officer's Club. Saw "Bathing Beauty" again.

Wednesday, 6 June 1945.

Up at 5:30 A.M. to leave for Natal, Brazil at 0700. Bad weather at Ascension. Bad weather en route. Took 7 hrs. & 25 min. 1255 m.m. The field here is beautiful. We live in - 4 to a room - one story barracks. Beautiful Mess hall & good food. Bought mom 4 prs. of silk stockings & Pop a beautiful alligator skin pipe pouch. Hope to get myself some boots tomorrow. We are staying over a day so the E.M. can be paid. This field is Parnamirim Field. Rainy weather here. Loaned Chalfen \$16.50. Saw Donald O'Connor & Peg Ryan in "Patrick the Great." We live in one story red barracks. 4 to a room - very nice.

field has improved considerably. Had my 1<sup>st</sup> "ration-free" cokes. Changed into Moroccan Francs again. To bed early - lived in a nice red stucco building.

Thursday, 7 June 1945.

Stayed over today. Bought a pair of light brown boots – nice. Saw Betty Grable in “Billy Rose’s Diamond Horseshoe” – very nice. More rainy weather. Chalfen owes me \$20.00 now.

Friday, 8 June 1945.

Up at 04:30 to leave for Belem, Brazil. Still rainy out. Took an even five hours. Came by way of Fortaleza, Terrific jungle en route. Stayed at Val de Caes airfield. Airfield cut out of jungle about 6 miles from Belem. We lived in nice on story white barracks similar to he ones at Natal. Field rather small. Saw movie “I Love a Mystery.”

Saturday, 9 June 1945.

Did not leave – weather too bad. Bought another pair of boots – better than ones at Natal. Food fair. Saw movie “The Affairs of Susan.”

Sunday, 10 June 1945.

Missing my hat – damn it. Left for Trinidad where we dropped off Radlec [?] & Magzence (sp?) around

Monday, 11 June 1945.

Up at 5 A.M. Left for Puerto Rico – Borinquen Field. No trouble this time – amazing. Yesterday we had supercharger trouble, Borinquen is a lot like Maxwell-immense and very, very nice. Food poor, but the barracks – we live in a small two story bungalow-gray, cement & modern. Seven live upstairs & seven downstairs – bathroom, kitchen stove & refrigerator too. A swell P.X. here – so much to buy. Bought Pop a box of cigars. Took us 5:25 hrs. to get here. Went from stem to stern through a B-29 – boy, what a bomber. Repacked my stuff. Were told we would get 30 days plus travel time. Should be home Weds. – all on gov’t expense. Swell.



TRANSIENT RATION  
TICKET

Good for one  
package cigarettes

DOC T. ALEXANDER, Capt, AU  
Exchange Officer  
Belem, Brazil

NOT TRANSFERABLE  
1152ND. AAFBU-SATD-ATC  
TRANSIENT RATION CARD  
Good for one package of cigarettes on date of issue  
and one package on each of four successive days.

Issued By: Mary J. Hardy  
Date of Issue: 4-6-45  
Issued To: [Signature]  
Not valid unless signed on Reverse Side.

3 4 5

NOT TRANSFERABLE

**KEEP THIS RECEIPT**

It must be shown when boarding plane.  
All transients staying more than one  
night must re-register before noon or  
night.

**YOUR BED WILL BE SOLD**

TAKE BED ASSIGNED YOU. PLANE DEPARTURE  
DEPEND ON YOUR LOCATION BEING ACCURATE.

Bks. No. 3 Rm. No. 8 Bed. B

OB 59347 AMT. 50 CLERK

REGISTRATION OFFICE PHONE NO. 507.  
REGISTER DAILY IN CASE OF LAY-OVER.  
SLEEP THE MORE  
THE BETTER THE QUALITY OF SLEEP.  
FIND THE BEST ROOM FOR YOUR  
COMFORT AND REST.

HTG. NO. 93 BED NO. 53

**KEEP THIS RECEIPT**

It must be shown when boarding plane.  
All transients staying more than one  
night must re-register before noon or  
night.

**YOUR BED WILL BE SOLD**

TAKE BED ASSIGNED YOU. PLANE DEPARTURE  
DEPEND ON YOUR LOCATION BEING ACCURATE.

Bks. No. 134 Rm. No. 8 Bed. B

OB 59377 AMT. 50 CLERK

Tuesday, 12 June 1945.

Should leave for Morrison Field, near West Palm Beach, Fla. & then to Savanna, Ga.- Hunter Field today. Left around 7 A.M. Very nice trip. Hit U.S. coast at 11:27 A.M. Came by way of Daytona Beach, Florida & Jacksonville to Hunter Field outside of Savanna, Ga. Our last B-24 hop for awhile. We expect to leave Hunter Field for Charleston, S.C. by troop carrier plane & from there by train to Ft. Dix, N.J. & then home. Boy, oh boy. Home until July 17<sup>th</sup>, 32 days.

F I N A L!

I am to return to Hunter Field to get ready to go to Pacific on B-29's. Our Club Officer, Bombardier instructor on B-29's and Assist. Base Adjutant.

0715. Found my hat. Weather was too bad at Trinidad so landed at Atkinson Field not far from Georgetown, British Guiana. Passed over Amazon & Equator. Field very nice - swell food. Lived in two story green barracks. Capt. Gullidge still stranded there. Went to swimming pool in P.M. Multi rain. Saw poor movie, "Jive Junction." Jungle terrific.

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(duplicate pages copied)

In August 1945, I arrived at Hunter Fld. to practice on B-29's and get ready to go to the Pacific. Atomic Bombs end the war so they gave me three jobs to do each day. I think I have found what I like in the Army Air Corps - Administration and Bombing Navigator.

I decided to stay in the Air Corps, but Dad wants me home to take over his A & Hagency so I will go in the Reserves instead and go to Ft. Dix to be discharged.

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[www.funnyplace.org](http://www.funnyplace.org)

Mission #22 – Tues. 24 April '45

This mission has haunted me all these years. It should not have as I was not at fault, but I felt I should have sensed what was going on. The Col. and Major Lather came to me and said Lt. Smith had been pleading to be a lead pilot. So they decided to let him since the war was winding down. With my good record, they assured me all would work out. I told them I didn't want to fly with him. I considered him excitable – not calm and cool as Johnny Dayton. All seemed fine as we reached out T.P. As was my practice, I asked for a level. Smith said the plane was level. It wasn't and he dumped my gyro in the Norden Sight, somehow I managed to cap it and look ahead for the target and synchronize & asked for my second level and told the pilot to lighten off the formation, which he did.

I synchronized on the center of the marshaling yard. They were loaded with trains. Bombs released. I look out the sight side blister and was stunned to see a perfect bomb pattern explode beside the yards on the little village of Roveretto. I was furious, felt heartsick. Then I guess what happened. The plane was not level as Smith had said. News apparently flashed to 15<sup>th</sup> A.F. Hdqts. In Bari. When we landed, Smith and I were taken to Gp Hdqts. Top Brass had flown up from Bari demanding an explanation. They asked me what happened? Before I could answer, Smith stood up and confessed he fell apart with all the flak and failed to give me proper levels.

That ended it. My strike photos showed what happened. They just waited for him to admit it.

Prior to Sat. the Kasbah was off limits to Americans. Some had been killed there. As Executive Officer of the crew, J. D. Miller, one of our gunners, came to be for permission to go into the Kasbah. I said no way. He would be arrested if caught and we would have a big problem. J.D. loved the women and said he "had to have a Kasbah girl – all and all." Without permission he sneaked off and got into the Kasbah. We were always being shown V.D. films which were very vivid. J. D. came back looking sick-he said he met a girl who took him to her place. When they got ready, she was on her back removing her garment when in the dim light he saw awful sores on her lower body. J.D. said he three up on her, pulled his pants us, and fled! J.D. didn't seem to be so oversexed when we were in Italy.

As I went thru the Kasbah with the Red Cross and our guards the Kasbah men kept pointing to my officer cap and whispering among each other. Then I realized what interested the. The issued cap insignia (gold eagle) was a cheap one. I came across one that looked like gold and wasn't. They apparently wondered about it and would like to get their hands on it. I made a point to stay in the middle for safety.

## Robert L. Henbest



**HENBEST, Robert L.**  
Major (USAF) Retired)  
Loving Father & Grandfather  
Age 86, formerly of Roricks Glen Parkway, Elmira, NY, passed away on Saturday, February 13, 2010. Son of the late Edmund J. and Helen M. (Yost) Henbest was born August 25, 1923. Bob is survived by his sons, William (Cynthia) Henbest and Theodore (Suzanne) Henbest; daughters, Judith (James) Bayer and Jacqueline Henbest, all of Elmira, NY; grandchildren, Danielle, Sarah and Will Henbest, Heather, Teddy and Megan Henbest, Christopher and Matthew Bayer. Bob was predeceased by his wife of 54 years, Grace Rowley; grandson, Jeremy Bayer; brothers, Harold,

Edmund, Leonard and Fred; sister, Emily Watts. Bob retired in 1988 after 47 years as President/Treasurer of Henbest & Morissey, Inc. He also retired from the Board of Directors of Elmira Savings Bank in 1988. Bob was a graduate of Elmira Free Academy with business honors. He attended Lycoming College and Wharton Business School. Bob served in WWII as a lead bombardier in the Army Air Corps flying missions out of Italy in Southern Europe. He received many awards including two Presidential citations, the Distinguished Flying Cross, five Air Medals and four Battle Stars in the European/Mediterranean Theatre. Bob also served as Commander of the 9313th VART Squadron and as Deputy Adjutant of the 9062nd VART Reserve Group. After the war, Bob was sent to Chatham Field, Savannah, GA, where he served as Bombardier Instructor on B-29's, Deputy Base Adjutant and Officer Club Manager. Bob retired from the Air Force as Major after serving 22 years both Active and Reserve Time. Bob joined his father in the Insurance business beginning Henbest & Son. After his father's death two years later, Bob became president of the company and throughout the years acquired 23 competing insurance businesses. Bob loved volunteering at the Office for the Aging, Arnot Ogden Medical Center, R.S.V.P., Red Cross Blood Drives, The National Warplane Museum and the National Soaring Museum. Bob also enjoyed being involved with The Collings Foundation. He was a member of the Elmira Heights American Legion, Retired Officers Association and past Trustee of the North Presbyterian Church. Family and friends are invited to call at the Olthof Funeral Home, Inc., 1050 Pennsylvania Ave., Elmira/Southport, NY on Saturday, February 20, 2010, from 11:00 to 12:00 (noon). A Memorial Service honoring Bob's life will follow the visitation at noon. The Reverend Gary Chorpenning will celebrate the services for his friend. Interment will follow in the National Overlook section in the Woodlawn Cemetery where the Chemung County Honors Squad will accord Major Henbest Military Honors. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Bob's name may be directed to the Wings of Eagles Museum or the Chemung County SPCA. Envelopes will be available at the funeral home. A "Candle of Remembrance" may be left for his family in obituaries at [www.olthof.com](http://www.olthof.com) **THANK YOU**  
The Henbest family wishes to express their sincere thanks, appreciation and gratitude to the third floor staff of Founders Pavilion in Corning for their wonderful care given to Bob.

